BIRTH, INFANCY AND EARLY TRAINING

due to the fact that there is no formal ceremony for the naming in Artas, as in Silwa, and hence the change is easier. 553

Since the enforcement of registration of births about forty years ago, the child is registered after the ceremony. It is to be remembered that still-births are not registered, and are never buried in the cemetery, but always below the threshold of the house. 656 845

The mother takes no active part in all the ceremony activities, as she is not allowed to move from her room of confinement until forty days have elapsed. As mentioned earlier, the child is considered to be guarded throughout this period by the angels, who talk to him, entertain him, and sometimes tease or even annoy him. This is the explanation of the baby's occasional smiles, as well as cries. He smiles because the angels have told him that his father is alive, and cries when they inform him that his father has died. 846 [876] [877]

By the end of the forty days, the mother finishes her period of confinement and is considered to be in full control of the baby. She can move about with him and resume her ordinary domestic tasks as she becomes ceremonially clean after having her first bath, a kind of ritual cleansing. [783]

The end of this confinement means the gradual introduction of the child to the wider family circles by taking it on visits to relatives or them visiting the house with presents. If the mother takes the child to any house, the child is never expected to leave empty-handed. Whether near or distant relatives, or of no blood connection at all, they always give the child presents varying from salt, dates, a loaf of bread, an egg, to money and more valuable things. On the birth of the first child the paternal grandfather cannot see his grandson without sending a ram or a goat before his arrival. 846 851 431

Another step is the introduction of the newly-born boy to the other boys in the neighbourhood. For this purpose the mother prepares a dish of boiled maize or wheat and sugar, called 'balila', and taking her child, accompanied by the children of the neighbourhood, repairs to some elevated land to eat the food. For this occasion the mother dresses in new scented clothes. For the first time also, the child wears new clothes, consisting of a white undergarment covered by a striped one, thus discarding his mother's or father's old wrappings. 851 846 858

It is socially encouraged that both a woman and a man should give vein to their intense desire for children. The main function of marriage is to have children and thus perpetuate family life. This shows itself in one of the condolatory phrases addressed to any offspring on the occasion of their father's death: 'He who has left successors is not dead.' My informant, Ali, said, 'A childless couple will have no "successors" to read the "Fatiha" for their souls after their death and their name will thus end by their departure from this world. Children are really useful, not only in this world but in the world hereafter. The Prophet (on whom be the peace and blessings of God) said, "Get married and multiply, as I shall take 841 [183] [581]

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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Silwa

854 garment. This cloth can be removed, washed, or just dried, or changed. The child is often wiped with another cloth, but is not necessarily washed, if it soils itself. At the fourth month it is supported between its mother's feet, sitting to defaecate when the mother senses that it is uncomfortable or when it cries, and the cloth is put on only when it goes to bed. No fuss of any kind is made about urine, while more attention is given to faeces, yet revulsion is never shown by the mother. When the child starts to walk
863 it is trained to say 'kaka' when it wants to defaecate, whereupon the mother lifts its garment and asks it to go to a special corner or room in the house or to go outside. After the age of three or four most parents insist that both boys and girls defaecate outside the house, or go to the special room in the house.

514 While the boys from now on always perform their evacuation outside, he girls are confined to the house again after they reach the age of twelve. Girls always squat for urination while boys stand, but on reaching adolescence the latter squat also. In the case of boys, the tucking up of the dress or pants and the crouching posture of evacuation tend to direct attention to the exposed genitals, while in the case of girls, after the age of six or seven at most, they, in contrast, envelop the whole process with their dress, which is never tucked up. One can see boys of all ages up to eight or nine evacuating within sight, with no sense of embarrassment. When they reach puberty they seek out-of-the-way places, facing a stone or a heap.

863 It is not without justification that one can make the hypothesis that the absence of disgust towards faeces and urine with regard to the infants' early training is a cultural way of conditioning the individual to bear tolerantly the odour that attends the village sanitary conditions, swamps, and handling of animal dung either as fertilizer or as fuel.

856 Sitting and teething are considered as important events to be watched in the child's growth. By the end of the fourth month the mother begins to train her child to sit up. The saying is that a boy of four months must be able to sit up, or he should be beaten. The girl is expected to be able to sit up a little later, at the end of the fifth month. The mother makes her son sit up on the ground with his legs outstretched, supporting his back with her hands, or puts him in a large mixing or cooking pan with tall curving sides. If the boy is not taught to sit up for himself at this age, and abandon gradually the horizontal suckling position, he would be liable to have an
[827] unpleasant breath smell when he grows up.

It is also recognized that teething is accompanied by either ophthalmia
[1597] or diarrhoea. The mother's milk is sometimes used as a treatment for the sore eyes at this period.

852 On the first instance of the breaking of any of the milk teeth, at the age of five or six, the tooth is put into donkey dung and thrown into the 'sun's eye', asking the sun to change the donkey's tooth for a tooth of a gazelle.

[304] Another important event in the child's life after the end of the forty

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

THE AIMS AND METHODS OF SOCIALIZATION IN SILWA

Besides learning from their parents and elders, children also learn through their association with slightly older boys and girls (by three or four years but certainly not more than five or six years) who usually assume the role of leadership or teachers in work or play. As in Tale society, every pupil becomes, in some situation, a teacher for others.

It must be noted, however, that the behaviour pattern and motivation in the learning situation where adults are involved are different from those of the age-group learning situation. In the former, subservience, respect, and fear are expected, while in the latter rivalry and reciprocity on equal terms are the norms. If the child does not come up to adult expectation, it is because 'it deliberately twists its neck which should be straightened by a slap'. Discipline and compulsion are the means for enforcing conformity and 'adab' on children by their elders. On the other hand, amongst the age groups, mocking, ridiculing, and scoffing at those who do not reach the expected level of maturity are the pressures exerted by their peers. In this connection, nicknames are frequently used by children to single out the ones who are laggards in their social maturity, partly a continuation of the sibling rivalry pattern of motivation.

The two following examples indicate some of the ways in which boys deal with each other. A boy of fifteen who did not appear weak found it rather difficult for some time to fill the panniers of his camel with fertilizer, and other boys had to help him. Failing to perform the task expected from boys of his age, his fellows decided to put a girl's headcloth round his head-cap, by taking off his turban. Then he was tied to the panniers and the other boys led the half-laden camel to the field. This method, occasionally resorted to by such boys, is supposed to awaken the sense of shame in those who are not sufficiently keen on doing what is expected of them. The other example is that of a fight of a boy of about ten years old with other boys because he 'broke wind' while they were playing. When asked, he denied the fact, and they went on smelling each other. When they discovered that he was the culprit, they started building him a grave in which they buried a stone as a symbol for the boy, shouting 'the farter is here, the farter is here'. They also bewailed him as adults would bewail a deceased person, by saying, 'There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is his Prophet'. Indeed, lack of control and modesty after the age of ten can be a source of ridicule for children about this age.

Moreover, if restraint and docility are the keynotes of child behaviour towards adults, a free and impulsive life reigns amongst children themselves. Their own problems must be kept to themselves and not communicated whenever possible to their adults, who are not expected to enquire about children's activities. For children, it is gossip that a child would go and tell his parents what other boys and girls have been saying or doing. If two boys or more start quarrelling with each other, they should fight the issue out for themselves. The laying of complaints by children before their elders about quarrels with other children is greatly discouraged, and when complaints are taken up by fussy parents, they might keep the whole

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

Sometimes if a woman has no children her friends will take her
842 152 to the railway and make her lie down between the lines in order that the train may pass over her. One reason given me for this somewhat dangerous procedure is that the fear which the woman [827] experiences assists conception, for it is said to cause the blood to circulate quickly through the body, making the womb expand, with the result that she will more easily conceive. Another ex-

[291 192]

FIG. 45. FERTILITY RITE: LIGHTING THE 'CANDLE'

[776 774] planation given me for this rite was that when the mother is thus frightened her *karīneh* comes to her with the soul of one of her dead children and causes it to re-enter its mother's body. The soul of a dead child, so I have been told, goes to its mother's *karīneh*. Probably these explanations are accepted by some of the people, but in many cases, I fancy, such rites are merely carried out because they are customary and recognized cures for childlessness.

764 842 The water with which a corpse is washed before burial is, if possible, obtained from a mosque or from a sheikh's sacred well. After the washing is completed a barren woman will seize the opportunity to step over this water seven times. I was told of one who resorted to this device and who became pregnant a month afterward.

or like a silver thread in the distance. He resorts to it more often than to his fellowmen. He does not pray to it, as his ancestors did, but he constantly visits it. The Nile is in his blood. There is the same intimate bond between the Nile and the fellaheen as between the sea and the fishermen of Brittany. They even call it *el Bahr*, the sea, and their fields they call "shores" (*el rîf* — plural *el ariaf* — the usual word for the Egyptian countryside) ("a). At High Nile they believe women to be more fertile and men more healthy; marriages are most often celebrated at this season. If a child is sickly or ill, his mother takes him on the Nile at this time, and makes him throw sweets and dates into the clayey waters, with the words "Oh Nile, let my strength grow like your depth". A dying fellah, before he breathes his last, is given a final draught of its living water.

In the Coptic Mass there is the following prayer: "Vouchsafe, O Lord, to bless this year the water of the river. By Thy grace bring it to due height. Gladden the face of the land, that the fields may have water and the crops be multiplied."

The silt of the Nile has its part also in the rites of life and death. The fellâha, when her time is coming, crawls to the brink of the water and takes up a handful of moist earth, which she will swallow at the time of delivery to ensure a successful birth.

When the *mizayen* cuts the child's hair for the first time, the hair ceremoniously cut off is not flung to the winds, but carefully rolled into a ball of earth.

Professional mourners bedaub their breasts, heads, and arms with mud as a sign of grief. The body is put into the earth without either coffin or clothes.

The fellaheen bury in the earth the jar containing their savings, and charms which they wish to take effect. Every birth affects the soil; the after-brith is buried inside the house, and the umbilical cord, wrapped up in a little bag with a few grains of corn, is dug into the father's field.

The fruits of the earth are still more closely involved in this peasant mysticism. The analogies between vegetable life and the peasants' own extremely physical existence make them believe in an interplay of fertility between the two.

The ceremonies of the seventh day, when the newly-born child is washed and given a name, often include the following

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powder of Egyptian natron, and this "prescription" is in fact, said to be advantageous, when the barrenness is due to the acidity of the fluids secreted by the women's reproductive organs, for it counteracts its effect, without preventing the male fertile germs, as formerly was the case, from reaching the female generative germ.

XX

THE MUTA'AWWAḲA

This is the woman who gives birth, but whose children die. The best known "cure" is an "operation" which is performed every year, called "the Cutting of the Follower" (*ḳaṭ' al-tabī'a*), which is practised by certain special "Old Wives." The manner of it is that the "old wife" comes to the husband and his spouse and makes them stand in front of one another. Then she takes a fowl which is jet black, without the least blemish in it, kills it, extracts its entrails, and plucks its feathers, and cuts a thread which she has previously joined between the thumbs of the husband and his wife. Then she collects all these things for the safety of the woman, and buries them all under the threshold of her room. Thereupon she departs after receiving a weighty reward in compensation for the fowl. By such acts the women believe that the child will live, as if these had [p. 46] a secret influence on its life. It is customary to repeat this experiment at each birth if success follows it the first time. The payment also is increased two, or three, or four fold, and so on, with each successive year, the mother believing that if she does not do so, the "operation" will not succeed in future.

They explain all this by saying that the husband has a mate (*ḳarīna*),[1] one of the Jinn, who is seized with jealousy

[1] [This is a very widespread belief. In most cases, it appears, the "mate" is of the opposite sex. That is, a man is possessed by a *ḳarīna* (fem.); a woman, by a *ḳarīn* (masc.). But there are exceptions noted. Miss Blackman (p. 69 ff.) does not note the sexual difference. Dr. Zwemer, in his work, *The Influence of Animism on Islam*, devotes a complete chapter (VI) to the subject of the *Ḳarīna* or familiar spirit. See below the section entitled "The *Ḳarīna*" p. 46). Tr.]